Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/578565572

Downloaded on Mar 25, 2024

Letters

Postscript at 3 a.m.

"Goodbye." A word best said softly and quickly.

I will no longer be writing for the *L.A. Weekly*. The best answer to "why" is simply that everything stops one day. Nine and a half years is a long time. Today it stops. I've loved writing alongside writers like Ginger Varney, John Powers and Helen Knode. Jay Levin gave me perhaps more freedom than any columnist in the United States has enjoyed in this era, and I thank him for that. But most crucial is the strange relationship I've felt with you out there — you gave me more than I'm sure you knew, because I felt *read* in such a way that brought out words I hadn't guessed were in me. It's hard to leave that — which doesn't change the fact that now's the time.

Thank you. Goodbye.

—Michael Ventura

LIFE IN HELL

©1988 BY MATT GROENING

THE 77 MOODS OF AKBAR & JEFF

Jackson Town

Dear Editor:

While I appreciated Jay Levin's editorial endorsing Jesse Jackson in the California presidential primary ["The Smartest and the Wisest," *L.A. Weekly*, June 3-9], I strongly object to one statement: "[Dukakis and Jackson] are about equally strong on rights enforcement for minorities, the disabled, gays, refugees and immigrants." This may be true for some of the groups mentioned, but definitely not for gays and lesbians. Jackson has gone out of his way to show support for gays and lesbians, while Dukakis has made no such effort. Dukakis has even said, "Having the gays against you isn't the worst thing that could happen" (or words to that effect). He also signed into law a policy that practically prevents gays and lesbians in Massachusetts from becoming foster parents.

Still, if Dukakis is nominated to run against Bush, I will support him.

—Johanna Butler
Inglewood

Dear Editor:

I read Jay Levin's Jesse Jackson editorial and found it unconvincing. Jackson's inability to clearly and unequivocally renounce and denounce Louis Farrakhan's message of hate and divisiveness marks him as morally indefensible and, politically, a loser. (I'm still awaiting the *Weekly*'s hard-hitting expose of Farrakhan's college lecture tour, in which he seeks to blame all the blacks' problems in this country on the Jews.) I also found Levin's attack on Kitty Dukakis reprehensible. One does not have to be Jewish to want a strong and viable Jewish democratic state in the Middle East. One only has to be a patriotic American in favor of democratic forces throughout the world.

—Stan Hoffman
Hollywood

Dear Editor:

It is one thing to tout the candidacy of Jesse Jackson; it is quite another to heap scorn on Dukakis and calumny on the Jewish people. Saying that Arabs are "practically a non-people" in the eyes of Dukakis is simply not true. Those who know him through his record and his speeches are aware that he has a deep and abiding respect for the larger Arab nation. (If there are those within that nation who are murderous thugs, then I am sure he does not abide their ideas.) And what does the religion of Kitty Dukakis have to do with her husband's candidacy? Would Levin also say that Jesse Jackson is against the racist policies of South Africa because, after all, his wife is black and has great influence over him?

Get real. Levin's Jewish background gives him no right to print this kind of racist gibberish. I believe an apology is in order.

—Richard Rebhun
W. Hollywood

JAY LEVIN REPLIES: *According to a variety of news reports (*Time *magazine,* The New York Times, The Washington Post*), Kitty Dukakis spent considerable time in Israel a few years ago and, as a Jew, developed an emotional bond primarily with the Jewish evangelist types who see Israel, including the West Bank, as God's given land to the Jewish people, and local Arab residents as potentially vicious interlopers. Notably, she did not develop a kinship with the Israeli Peace Now movement. Her influence over her husband was documented in last Sunday's* L.A. Times. *Reporting this is hardly "racist gibberish," but extraordinarily important for people to know, as U.S. policy in the Middle East is crucial to all parties: Israel, the Arabs and the United States. Dukakis himself displayed his real thinking in a remarkably revealing* L.A. Times *interview before the primary. (See Alex Cockburn's column in this issue.) As the* Times *interview suggested, Dukakis, influenced by his wife, has very few problems with the viciously repressive, non-negotiable policies of the current, very right-wing Israeli government (this being quite another matter than support for an Israeli state), even though many Jews and Jewish organizations are now opposing those policies. As to Mr. Rebhun's reference to Jackie Jackson, it would be noteworthy if she visited South Africa and came back urging strong support by her husband for the policies of the repressive South African government.*

Carson City

Dear Editor:

The *Weekly*, like a great wine, improves with age. However, I must comment on Tom Carson's "Party Animals" [*L.A. Weekly*, June 3-9], an editorial that is mind-boggling in its unintelligible sentence structure. It's as though the words have been scrambled in a tumbler and selected for random paste-up. This editorial obviously has great depth and insight for Carson and one or two friends who attend the same parties and lunch together 60 times a year. But, please, spare *me*!

—Ed Feld
Los Angeles

Enlightenment in the '80s

Dear Editor:

Re: Pamela Pietri's "Helping the Omless" [*L.A. Weekly*, May 27-June 2]. As a yoga student of some 20 years' standing, I've observed, with a mixture of perplexity and vexation, various trends come and go in the yoga world. The '60s and '70s saw the prominence of a kind of "hippie" yoga typified by the crook Rajneesh and the 13-year-old Guru Maharaj Ji. (Remember *him*?) But the pendulum will swing, and in the late '80s Ms. Pietri enlightens us to the fact that what yoga is really all about is "tightening one's ass and at the same time getting closer to God," as elucidated by "inspired experts who have managed to adapt an ancient holy discipline into a physical challenge for Western hedonists."

I take it that these Western hedonists are the "wounded and weary Westsiders" who are streaming into expensive yoga studios in Pacific Palisades and in high-rent districts in New York. They are weary, no doubt, from their daily struggle to escape the boredom and emptiness of their lives and want to find new and innovative ways to spend their money. What better environment than an elitist yoga center catering to their endless cravings and focusing even more intently on their self-centered aspirations?

It is certainly true that yoga is a discipline that brings us to a state of physical and psychological vigor, but it is not *only* that. Yoga is a reflection on life, a celebration of awareness, a guide to living in this freaky, gorgeous world with imagination, energy and compassion. It really has very little to do with bone-crunching workouts or designer yoga studios.

It is perhaps naive to expect that some such commercialization of probably the oldest uninterrupted metaphysical tradition on the planet should never occur. I am obviously being far too cranky about this. Besides, Pietri assures us that, upon taking up the new "urban yoga," a number of alluring "spiritual side effects" lie in store for us. Among them are the power to "glow" (whether only in the dark or at all times is unclear) and to "stare deeply into the eyes of a stranger." Hare Rama, what have I been missing?

—Nick Zonen
Venice

Don't Knock the Rock

Dear Editor:

Richard Meltzer's hatchet job on Rockaway Records' jazz bins is typical of his unsupported, vitriolic, petty prose. Actually, taking it seriously is probably a mistake, but his comments are so uninformed that I believe a reply is necessary.

First, we sell approximately 1,000 jazz records per week and have, on average, between three and five of these returned. Second, as anyone who shops here knows, these records are cheerfully taken back for full credit. I have *never*, in 10 years of owning and running this shop, had anyone complain about the consistent quality of our records. Mr. Meltzer, on the other hand, makes a living promulgating unfounded criticisms, bitchy complaints and spurious insults. He seems at best unhappy, at worst a real jerk. His suggestion about breaking records open on the sly is particularly unwelcome and typical of the insensitivity displayed by the rest of his sexist, humorless and inane article.

—Martin Levy
manager, Rockaway Records

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

Powered by Newspapers.com